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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the purpose, format, topics of seminar sessions, and participant recommendations of a conference on educational testing processes and their relation to blacks. The conference was held to familiarize participants with research data demonstrating the fallacies and inconsistencies inherent in the testing process as it relates to blacks, to examine the racist implications of reliance on accepted measures of ability, and to discuss related national laws and educational policies. Participant reactions to issues raised in the seminars are discussed. Twenty three recommendations made by participants are listed. (SB)

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TESTING, LABELLING CLASSIFICATION OF SIX MAJOR ISSUES FACING BLACKS

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TESTING, LABELLING CLASSIFICATION OF SIX MAJOR ISSUES FACING BLACKS

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The working paper, "Testing, Labelling and Classification": Six Major Issues Facing Blacks, contained major problems and related issues confronting Blacks in the testing process and the subsequent labelling and classification techniques used to humanize and stifle the intellectual development of the Black populace.

A delineation of the issues and problems discussed in the seminar sessions were:

1) the probability of intellectual genocide and in the final analysis physical genocide (cf. ideas of William Shockley, a Stanford professor and a Nobel Laureate) as being the most principal of all the manifest and latent aspects of the testing problems.

2) available evidences which demonstrate that there has been produced a wave of neo-conservative and empirical racism in educational policy research with Christopher Jencks' Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America being the most substantial of the evidence.

When this empirical study has been digested it states essentially:

1. Educational reform cannot bring about economic or social equality.

2. Genes and I.Q. scores have relatively little effect on economic success, and

3. School equality has little effect on achievement or on economic success achieved.

3) Ascertainable proof to show that law and educational policy have enabled the solidification of the well-documented syndrome of institutional racism.

Dr. Johnson cited the "Rodriquez Decision" which characterizes and typifies the use of the labelling and classification system in the United States as an illustration of how discriminating antiquated tax laws are being upheld to finance unequal and segregated school systems specifically in the state of Texas. Dr. Johnson also noted the issue as significant because it tested the Fourteenth Amendment and too, "the work Inequality" which is a biased piece of research in many places, was quoted in the deciding decision to uphold the existing school tax assessment law.

4) The statistical methodologies employed to document the rationale for social phenomena and to uphold status quo policy are evidently questionable and tenuous.

5) There are evidences of over-exploitation of the laws which govern educational' psychological measurement.

6) There are evidences which suggest that the helping relationship professions (counselors, social workers, psychologists, teachers, psychiatrists, administrators, etc.) collaborate with the testing industry in over-exploiting the rules and laws of the psychological and educational measurements and hence this strengthens and systematizes the negative and dehumanizing aspects of the labelling, and the classification scheme.

The work by Rosenthal (1973) Banks, Berensen & Carkhuff (1967) and Johnson (1974), and others see the people in the helping relationship professions as being indicted as a function of their imprudent and spurious use of psychometric instruments and the results which these instruments yield.

The selected pertinent issues which the facilitators thought would adequately generate dialogue among participants in the seminars on the testing question included:

1) The issue which concerns the probability of the testing question leading to a system of intellectual and eventual physical genocide of Blacks.

2) The issue and problem of there being afoot a vanguard of neoconservative empirical racism in research effecting educational policy.

3) The issues and problem of there being ascertainable proof which illustrates that the law and educational policy have achieved a solidification of the well-documented virulent policy and syndrome of institutional racism.

4) The issue and problem of the illegitimate, inaccurate, and unreliable use of statistical methodology and questionable and ill-conceived research designs to support the petulent status quo doctrines and social policy of oppression and racism.

5) The issue and problem of "over-exploitation" of the laws and principles which govern educational/psychological measures.

6) The issue and problem of there being evidences which indict the professional helping relationship agents in their role of conspiring with the testing industry to subject Blacks to a system of labelling and classification.

PURPOSE:

The purpose, in order to intellectually stimulate the participants and to establish the perspective was to familiarize the participants with the researched data which demonstrated the fallacies and inconsistencies inherent in the testing process as they relate to the Black populace; to inform and to facilitate the participants in coming to grips with the inextricable woven network of the national laws and educational policies; and to expose and examine the multifarious methodologies inherent in the empirical research process so as to demonstrate the elementary concepts which allows one to understand how research can be manipulated unethi-

cally to achieve an end which is detrimental to the growth and development of Black children specifically and the Black body politics generally.

FORMAT OF THE SESSION

Each seminar session was comprised of approximately 30 participants. Upon initiation of each session the participants were divided into mini-groups of five and a working paper entitled, "Testing, Labelling, Classification": Six Major Issues Facing Blacks was disseminated to each group for their perusal, examination and reaction. The groups were given one-half hour for this task which allowed the participants an opportunity to achieve a feel for the selected issues, generate thoughts from each other, and to also provide each participant an opportunity to gain a better acquaintance with other members from different areas of the country; thus allowing for an exchange of ideas concerning the same or different problems as they relate to Black Child Development.

Immediately following the reading, examination and reaction period, the mini-groups were reassembled to form a plenary session. Dr. Johnson's socratic facilitative methodology enabled the participants to synthesize and openly discuss the priority items and issues as previously discussed in their mini-group analysis session.

SEMINAR SESSIONS

As to issue number one, intellectual genocide, there appeared to be mixed positions among the participants related to the rebuttal of Shockleys' ideas on the "retrogressive evolution". Some participants suggested that a position be taken to discourage the waste of vital Black resources to react

to white racist researchers. However, the general consensus of the participants was that Shockley's ideas, indeed well publisized theories, concerning dysgenics, do in fact lead up to physical genocide (bonus sterilization) as well as intellectual genocide (the theory that Blacks are genetically inferior) and must be rebutted on the same intellectual plane. In the same light there has to be brought afoot a strategem to educate the masses of Black people to make them aware of Shockley's dysgenics theory as well as the theories of others who are using tenuous psychological data on Blacks and the inherent implications. This knowledge could in fact be brought about through self-awareness seminars intertwined with basic research training facilitated by competent individuals, community action organizations, or from political vantage points to incorporate the whole of the Black populace.

The net result of the syndome of individual racism, supported by law and educational policy was discussed. That being, the mal-nurturance of students who are of color and poor and who will inevitably show up on the tests classified as "disadvantaged". The participants suggested more political involvement by educators, parents, individuals, groups and organizations concerned with Black child development is necessary to overcome the national monumental problem centered within the labelled "inner city".

Furthermore, a general consensus was achieved on the issue of research being entered into from a Black perspective and that interaction and education of the Black community should be facilitated by sensitive

and qualified Black agencies and professionals to accurately assess and assist in valid testing methodologies and labelling process for the Black Populace. It was advanced as a viable alternative by the facilitator that Black people refrain from participating in research which will have a social risk-meaning consequences which may be detrimental to the "health" of Black people and that experimental types of designs should not be permitted in the Black community until a Black Social research committee is established to make that community aware of the intended use of the research and its findings.

The participants in each session were equally concerned with the testing processes, the types of tests administered and those who are involved in the subsequent labelling and classification processes. The reliability, validity and legitimacy of present psychological tests were questioned as it relates to the Black populace. There was a call for tests to be developed by Black psychologists and educators and a Black norm formed. A suggestion to boycott psychological tests until such time that the tests were standardized on a representative body of the Black populace was also suggested. Teacher made tests were discussed as they relate to the individual assessment of a student's progress in particular subject areas thereby accomplishing the task of tests--to test what has been taught.

Dr. Johnson raised the question, explained, and analyzed the helping relationship professions and their role in test administration; for it is these individuals' responsibility to interpret the tests once

they have been administered. Herein lies the real crux of the problem. It is suggested that these individuals involved with the labelling and classification process take the responsibility upon themselves to use the gestalt method of looking at a total or whole being before assessing and categorizing a human being with a label that will shadow him for life. Parents, educators, community organizations and the like should make themselves aware of the dehumanizing effect mis/unethical labelling and classification can have upon the educational processes involved with the mis/unethically labelled individual and take the initiative to bear these facts indelibly upon the minds of those involved in the testing, labelling and classification processes. All Blacks should be actively involved with the amelioration of the mis-use of tests and the subsequent process of mis/unethical labelling and classification of the Black populace. The problem yet remains, however, of the lack of sensitization of those involved in the "so -called" helping relationship professions and the necessity of sensitization if the Black populace is to be accurately assessed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

The following are the actual recommendations made by the participants in the seminars. Hence, the input is from the primary level--the fundamental client.

1. Suggest we take a position to discourage the waste of vital Black resources, human and material, to react to white racist researchers.
2. Boycott psychological testing.
3. Mount community research review and screening committees.

4. Develop Black oriented Test Batteries.

5. Interaction and education of the Black Community by sensitive and qualified Black agencies and Black professions in order to facilitate accurate and valid testing and labelling for Blacks, by Blacks. In other words, Black parents and children should be involved and educated about the purpose, validity and political ramifications of testing and classification. In fact, if the tests are invalid the community and agencies should recognize this in order to react against it.

6. Establish ways of maintaining linkage between those with traditional certificates and community people.

7. More regional conferences.

8. Clarification between I.Q. and intelligence.

9. Need for understandable definitions of research terms.

10. Need for better teacher-training.

11. Development of tools to give a teacher to measure success of her teaching.

12. A committee of psychologist, parents, professionals, and BCDI staff made available for conference participants and to all members.

13. Resources for securing tests material, evaluation devices, etc.

14. Relevant reviews of pertinent issues in testing or WHY to refuse test participation.

15. Ideas from participants for dissemination.

16. Dissemination of information needed by the general education--public and parent, to aid all of our Black Children.

17. Listing of resource--Black psychologists.

18. Establishment of periodical or newsletter by Black psychologists to deal with popular subjects.

19. Annual conference for Black educators related to testing and measurement and for planning and sharing of the information on testing, etc. should be handled by National Association for Black Psychologists in an effort to provide people in the field with new information.

20. Conferences should give credit or competency points for participation.

21. Lobby to fight for a moratorium on labelling processes.

22. Involve the media to bring light to the problem and state a position.

23. Propose liasons to make the services of Black psychologists available.